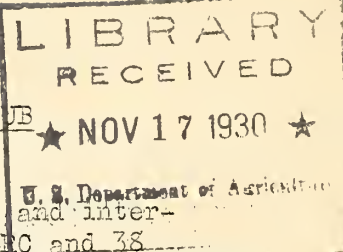


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OCTOBER MEETING OF THE PROGRESSIVE GARDEN CLUB



A radio talk by Professor C. P. Close, Extension Service, and inter-views by various members of the Garden Club, delivered through WFO and 38 other radio stations associated with the National Broadcasting Company, October 28, 1930.

ANNOUNCEMENT: Today, ladies and gentlemen, we present the second regular meeting of the Progressive Garden Club. The members of the Club are dropping in by ones and twos for the meeting, and the subject of our discussion is Beautiful Homes, or How to Make Our Home Surroundings More Attractive. The meeting will be in charge of Mr. J. R. Beattie, organizer and chairman of the Club. Here they are: (General conversation with two or three voices direct into the microphones).

MISS BENNETT: How-do-you-do Mrs. Brown, I hope your cold is better today.

MISS FURRY: (languidly) Yes it is better, but the weather is so changeable and I just seem to have one cold after another ---

MISS BENNETT: Say, John, when is Mary coming home, seems to me she is making a mighty long stay in the city ----

MR. TEUTON: Well, well, if there isn't Sam Parsons. Why, hello Sam, thought you would be too busy shucking corn to come to the garden meeting.

MR. BEATTIE: Say you fellows, come on up here and let's get this meeting started.

CHAIRMAN: (raps for order) Will the Progressive Garden Club please come to order.

MISS BENNETT: (sotto voice) Yes we were surprised but I'll tell you all about it after the meeting (silence for about 2 or 3 seconds).

CHAIRMAN: I am glad to see so many present at this our second regular monthly meeting of the Club, and I hope you will all tell your friends and neighbors about these programs. Today, ladies and gentlemen, we have as our guest speaker a man who has traveled both in this country and abroad, and who has observed the home life and living conditions of the rural people of the different countries. In his travels he has especially noted how these people have improved their home surroundings by the use of flowers and ornamental plants. In this country he has studied the methods followed by the State Extension workers for improving the home surroundings of rural people. I have the pleasure of introducing Professor C. P. Close, Senior Extension Horticulturist, Office of Cooperative Extension Work, United States Department of Agriculture, who will give us a short talk on the subject of Beautiful Homes. Professor Close: (applause).

(over)

PROFESSOR CLOSE:

Mr. Chairman and members of the Progressive Garden Club: It certainly is a real pleasure to be with you today and to tell you some of the things I have observed in home beautification in foreign countries and in this country.

On May 23d last, Mrs. Close and I boarded the Steamship Carmania in New York for a vacation trip in Europe, with the Passion Play in Oberammergau, Germany, as our chief objective. We landed in Havre, France, and took train at once for Paris. Immediately upon landing at Havre this year, we were struck, as we were last year when we landed at Cherbourg, with the stability of buildings constructed of brick and stone. There is a pleasing harmony of construction in city, town and farm buildings and very seldom did we see even an out-building constructed of wood. The old civilization of Europe settled down long ago to stable and durable building construction, which we, in this new country, have not reached.

As we left Havre, we passed through wide stretches of country, without seeing individual farm homes. The farmers there, as in most of the European countries, live in communities and go to their fields, often several miles distant, to work during the day. Even the farm homes are built of brick and stone and are placed near together and are beautified, more or less, with shrubbery, trees and flowers. The beautifying of farm homes there is much the same as it is here with us. European people are great lovers of flowers and use more flowers than Americans do. Many of the homes both in the city and in the farming communities have window-boxes on the first, second and, in the cities, even on the third and fourth story windows. This is particularly true in France, Belgium, Switzerland and England. In Venice, that wonderful city of canals, window-boxes are used by the thousands. In the markets, flowers are abundant and cheap. In Southern France and Italy, twenty-five cents bought quite an armful of carnations or other flowers.

The English cottages are most attractive -- surrounded by masses of the most brilliantly colored flowers. In that cool summer climate the colors fairly blaze with brilliance. The brilliant masses of colors were a never ending delight. An English cottage with straw-thatched roof, surrounded with masses of beautiful flowers, is a sight never to be forgotten. The large estates and many of the homes are surrounded by high walls or hedges so we could not see the wonderful flower beds and shrubbery beds within. When we were on the upper deck of a motor bus though, we could look over the wall or hedge and see things very nicely. From a boat on the Thames River, we could look directly into the yards because there were no walls or hedges along the river front.

Although we found beautiful home surroundings everywhere, Switzerland is, by far, the most attractive and fascinating. Everything in Switzerland seemed to radiate beauty. There are individual farm homes scattered over the valleys and mountainsides, and every home is as spick and span, neat and clean, as though it had been freshly swept and laundered every day. We have but few farm sections in the United States which approach the farm homes of Switzerland for beauty and neatness.

In speaking of home beautification, I must not forget to tell you about the peculiar practice of beautifying homes in a few of the cities and towns of Southern Germany. In Oberammergau, where we saw the Passion Play, many of the houses have groups of angels, biblical and mythological characters and fancy designs of many patterns, painted on them.

In the cities, some of the homes do not have an entrance directly into them from the street. There is an entrance, guarded by a heavy iron gate, into a court-yard with fountains and shrubs and flowers. From this court-yard, there are entrances to the homes surrounding it. There are no front yards as the buildings set flush with the sidewalk.

MISS BENNETT:

Beg pardon, Professor Close, I'd like to know if the governments in the countries where you traveled help the people in beautifying their homes like our States help our people?

PROFESSOR CLOSE:

Well now, so far as I know the people over there do not get any help of this kind from their governments, but they do help themselves through local and national flower societies and fairs, and in the exchange of bulbs, plants, seeds, etc.

MR. TEUTON:

How about the people over there, do they seem to enjoy themselves? What do they do for amusement?

PROFESSOR CLOSE:

Oh yes, they certainly do enjoy themselves on the continent, and I think this is the result of their habit of living in communities. They love to gather at refreshment places and sit by the hour and gossip. This applies particularly to France, Italy, Germany and Belgium. In Switzerland the people get their pleasure in outdoor exercise. We saw long trainloads of boys and girls in warm clothing and stout shoes, with knapsacks on their backs and Alpen-stocks or canes in their hands, headed for the mountains, for a mountain climb. We also saw hundreds of them walking on long country hikes. Such a thing as automobile hitch-hiking is unknown over there. We also saw many large groups of men and women on country walking trips. It was amusing to us to see even the youngest school children with their books in a little knapsack strapped to their backs.

MISS FURRY:

Tell us something about home beautification as it is being done by the Government Extension Service on this side of the Atlantic.

PROFESSOR CLOSE:

I am very glad to answer this question because it is one of my lines of work being conducted in 18 States. The largest amount of home beautification work being done by the Extension Service is in the Southern States, and most of it is done by the County Home Demonstration Agents, under the leadership of the state landscape men and the State Home Demonstration Leaders.

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Many of these women were not trained in the arranging and planting of trees, shrubs and flowers when they entered upon their duties in the different counties, but they have studied beautification problems under the State Extension Landscape Men and are making a wonderful success of it. Some of the Home Demonstration Agents have 150 or more home demonstrations in their counties. One of the great teachers in landscape beautification work is Professor A. B. McKay of Mississippi. When a new home demonstration agent without landscape training goes into a county there, Professor McKay goes with her to two or three homes where shrubs and flowers have been planted and points out the different kinds of shrubs, giving their names -- the purpose for which they are used, and the reasons for their arrangement. He compares the home and its surroundings to a picture in a frame. The house and lawn, he says, represent the picture, and the plantings along the sides and front and back of the lawn, represent the frame of the picture. Around the house must be placed shrubs and flowers to hide part of the foundation walls, and to form a connection between the lawn and the house. He then advises the home agent to get nursery catalogues and study the descriptions and pictures of shrubs and flowers and plants, so as to become familiar with them. Then they go together to a home which is to be beautified and draw a plan for the planting of shrubs, flowers and trees around it. A stake is placed where each shrub or tree is to be set and the name of the shrub or tree is written on the stake. It is then an easy matter to plant each one where it belongs. Thus, the home agents soon become quite expert in planning simple beautification demonstrations.

A somewhat different plan is followed in Georgia where Professor H. W. Harvey is doing home beautification work with 80 per cent of the county agents and nearly all of the county home agents. He goes with them to the homes to be beautified and makes a planting sketch of each one. It is up to the agents then to look after the planting of trees, shrubs and flowers and do the follow-up work to keep the demonstrations going. This method is giving fine results.

The growth of this work in Georgia is speeded up by home beautification contests in which Professor Harvey is ably assisted by Miss Creswell and Miss Dowdy of the Home Economics Extension Staff. In the three-year contest which ended in December of last year, 160 Georgia farm women living in 29 counties, completed their demonstrations. As a result of this contest during the three years, 1,024 homes were beautified in some way as in removing fences, painting buildings, rearranging buildings, making lawns or planting trees, shrubs or flowers. In this contest, there were prizes of about \$25.00 worth of nursery stock for the winners in each county. This nursery stock was donated by the nurserymen of Georgia.

A new State-wide contest started in Georgia in January of this year. When I was down there on March 17th last, over 400 people had already signed up for this contest and many new names were being received every day.

In 1929, Professor Harvey worked in 122 counties. So popular had his work become that when his extension travel funds were exhausted last spring, the people requesting help paid his travel expenses.

I would like to tell the members of the Progressive Garden Club about the many other men and women who are doing most excellent home beautification work, but my time is up. I do want you to know, however, that I appreciate your very kind invitation to speak to you here today.

CHAIRMAN:

Thank you, Professor Close, for your interesting and instructive talk. I would like to ask you a question: Where do the home owners who are working under the direction and leadership of the Home Demonstration Agents secure the shrubs and other plants for planting around their homes?

PROFESSOR CLOSE:

Oh some of these plants are purchased from nurseries; others are secured by dividing old plants and by exchanging with neighbors; some are grown from cuttings or from seeds, as a part of the home improvement project. Many of the native plants are collected from the woods and along streams.

MISS BENNETT:

Professor Close, I would like to ask if the folks in the sections where you have been are doing anything in the way of improving their roadsides, planting trees for example?

PROFESSOR CLOSE:

Yes, the women of South Carolina, under the leadership of Mrs. Dora Dee Walker, have beautified over 200 miles of roadsides with trees, shrubs, and flowers. Georgia has started on a 70 mile highway improvement and Michigan has made a start in roadside tree planting. Quite a number of other States are also doing some tree planting along their highways. Unfortunately, about one-half of the States have no laws providing for the planting and protecting of roadside areas, therefore, much of the work must be done by private initiative with the consent of the abutting property owners. Lack of cooperation on the part of property owners very often interferes with the continuity of the plantings.

MR. TEUTON:

I would like to ask about the improvement of school and church properties, is this being done?

PROFESSOR CLOSE:

Oh yes, indeed, a very great deal of it. In fact, the improvement of school and church properties is included in the projects of all of the States doing landscape work. In most of the States, cemeteries and the grounds around court houses and other public buildings are also beautified. Public parks and auto camps also receive attention in some States. In South Carolina, a school, a church and a park area for a community center are included in the improvement plan. The school grounds create a community appeal but do not affect the general improvement of the community to any extent unless there are three or four improved homes combined with the project. Few people translate the improved appearance of the school grounds into terms of possible improvement of the surroundings of their own homes. For this reason a number of homes are improved along with the school or church properties so that the people will all get the lesson.

(over)

CHARIMAN:

Thank you again, Professor Close. This, ladies and gentlemen, brings to a close the meeting of the Progressive Garden Club for today and we invite you all to be with us again four weeks from today at this hour and the subject of that meeting will be "What Have We to be Thankful For."